

REGULAR MEETING – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009
ATRIUM CONFERENCE ROOM AT CITY HALL – 500 CASTRO STREET
6:30 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Siegel.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Committee Members: Ronit Bryant, Margaret Abe-Koga and Chair Jac Siegel.

City Staff Present: Cathy Lazarus, Public Works Director; Joan Jenkins, Transportation and Policy Manager; Lori Topley, Solid Waste Program Manager; and Steve Attinger, Environmental Sustainability Coordinator.

3. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC—None**

4. **MINUTES APPROVAL**

Minutes of the June 23, 2009 and October 7, 2009 Council Environmental Sustainability Committee (CESC) meetings were approved 2-0; Abe-Koga abstained due to not being present at the October 7 meeting.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1 **GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG)
INVENTORY AND EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGETS**

Staff presented results of the City's recently completed government operations greenhouse gas inventory and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets for consideration by the Committee and Council, and noted the Council approved community-wide greenhouse gas reduction targets on November 3, 2009.

The City completed an inventory of its 2005 government operations emissions in conjunction with ICLEI, which showed total emissions of 18,340 metric tons of CO₂e. The 2005 inventory will serve as a base-line year against which the City will measure its future emission reductions.

The next step to meeting AB 32 requirements is setting GHG reduction targets. The City's targets can be modified at any time based on measured results and/or economic and environmental considerations.

Staff recommends the following government operations GHG reduction targets:

- 15 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2010.
- 20 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2015.
- 25 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2020.
- 80 percent reduction below 2005 levels by 2050.

Total government operations emissions have already declined approximately 12 percent from 2005 through 2008 due to naturally decreasing landfill emissions. Considering additional landfill emissions decreases in 2009 and 2010 and several energy-efficiency projects completed between 2005 and 2010, the proposed 2010 reduction target of 15 percent appears easily achievable.

Achieving the proposed reduction targets will require the involvement of all departments, and the City has already taken numerous steps to reduce GHG emissions from its operations. To track progress toward emission reduction targets, the City will conduct an inventory of its government operations emissions at least every five years, the year after a target year.

Committee Comments

In response to a question about where the City can actually make reductions, and at what cost, staff explained that the estimated reduction potential of several planned projects is known, and after further analysis, staff will have a good sense where the City is in relation to the 2010 reduction goal.

A Committee member asked whether and when the City will develop a menu of project options with associated costs and budget. Staff explained they will develop a Climate Action Plan in 2010 for government operations, based on the ICLEI emissions data.

Regarding whether buildings other than City Hall will become green businesses, staff indicated the Senior Center has also been certified, the Municipal Operations Center will hopefully be certified this year, the Center for the Performing Arts will be examined, and the Community Center in its current form will not likely qualify.

The Committee asked several questions about the landfill emissions at 52 percent, whether they would decrease 12 percent every three years, and whether they would ever get to 0 percent given the reduction target of 80 percent by 2050. Staff explained that emissions will continue to decrease over time, but not necessarily at that rate, and they would not likely ever reach 0 percent. The current landfill gas capture efficiency is 93.7 percent, which is very good and not likely to improve that much.

Regarding how government operations and community-wide emissions are related, staff explained there are separate GHG inventories for each, with government operations accounting for 2.4 percent of overall community-wide emissions.

A Committee member indicated that setting reduction targets before having a more complete picture of which emissions reduction projects will be required to meet the targets is not ideal, but we should not delay setting the targets. The Committee member requested staff provide a synopsis of major GHG-reducing activities that have occurred since 2005 and are planned going forward, and recommended staff keep an ongoing tally of emissions reduction activities and their impacts, so this information can easily be conveyed to the Council.

A Committee member asked how the reduction targets were derived. Staff explained three factors were considered: (1) AB 32 requirements; (2) what targets other local cities have set; and (3) the ICLEI inventory report. Knowing that landfill emissions decreased 12 percent between 2005 and 2008, it seemed likely the City could reach the 15 percent reduction target by 2010, considering two additional years of decreasing landfill emissions and five years of energy-saving projects completed across City operations. To reach the longer-term targets, it will take effort on everyone's part, the City and community, but the Council can adjust the targets in the future if it wants to.

The Committee discussed it will be important to look at how best to allocate funds between City operations and the community, given city government's 2.4 percent contribution to overall emissions.

Public Input

Julie Lovins wanted to highlight the value of doing things that provide a good example to the community through the very good work being done in City operations.

John Carpenter commented on the importance of the City demonstrating projects that are easy for the entire community to follow. For more costly efforts, a joint City-community effort will be required.

Bruce Karney stated that reduction targets are just the beginning of the process. Sustainability is the big topic everyone should be discussing, including "economic" sustainability and where revenues are coming from. If the City is not economically sustainable, it will not have the money to put toward important sustainability efforts. He commented that landfills never stop releasing emissions, encouraged the City to study its engine idling more closely and inquired about the City Green Team.

Dave Paradise commented on the importance of energy efficiency first, but the City should also look at ways to get solar installations on City buildings through power purchase agreements (PPA).

John Carpenter said new LED Christmas lights are extremely efficient. He added that solar panel efficiency has gone up to 40 percent, so now is a good time to look at more solar on City buildings.

Committee Discussion

A Committee member reiterated interest in seeing staff's "menu" of possible actions and their associated costs, and assumed solar panels on City buildings would be included.

One Committee member commented although there can be a trade-off between the economics and environmental benefits, they are not mutually exclusive. He indicated concern about adopting goals without a clearly defined path to achieve them, but he thought the Council will accept them since they are goals.

Another Committee member commented on the importance of setting goals and getting started. She was concerned about two of the top three biggest emissions areas, landfill and employee commuting, being largely out of the City's control, but was comfortable taking a "wait-and-see" approach and revisiting the goals in the future if necessary.

One Committee member asked if anyone has analyzed the amount of energy used among different employee commute options, such as driving a car, taking the train or riding a bus, and commented that energy is being used regardless of the mode of transportation. Staff explained that if an employee does not drive, those emissions are never produced, but the train and bus will run whether or not the employee rides them.

A Committee member reiterated the City needs to serve as a role model for residents, to demonstrate what is possible, and should publicize what it is doing as a way of teaching the community there is a cost savings as well as a return. Another Committee member agreed the City should publicize its activities as a way of leveraging their impact.

Committee member Bryant moved to recommend the City Council adopt the following government operations GHG emission reduction targets:

- 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2010.
- 20 percent below 2005 levels by 2015.
- 25 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.
- 80 percent below 2005 level by 2050.

The motion was seconded by Committee member Abe-Koga. The motion passed 3-0.

5.2 UPDATE ON SINGLE-USE CARRY-OUT BAGS

Staff presented an update on single-use bags. In January 2009, the Council adopted a resolution supporting regional efforts to reduce single-use carry-out bag waste. Council was not asked to provide a consensus of what that approach might be. Council also provided comments on a model draft ordinance developed by the County-wide Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission (RWRC). Since then, the RWRC sent a recommendation to all the cities asking them to establish a ban on plastic bags and either a fee or ban on paper bags. Two cities have taken action, Palo Alto and San Jose. Palo Alto banned single-use bags at large supermarkets only; they are currently evaluating expanding that to additional retailers—they are also evaluating a paper bag fee or ban. As a result of a lawsuit filed against their original ordinance, they have agreed not to expand the ban until they have done an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

San Jose is developing an ordinance, prohibiting both plastic and paper single-use bags at all retailers except restaurants and nonprofit social service-type organizations. They anticipate allowing an exception for "green" paper bags, which are defined as having at least 40 percent recycled content—with or without a fee. San Jose is also preparing an EIR that should be available by January or February. That EIR could serve as a basis for ordinance development or adoption by other cities in the County.

Staff outlined several possible approaches for the CESC to consider for Mountain View, ranging from "wait and see" to suggesting that Council direct staff to develop an ordinance. Staff recommends a wait-and-see approach as it would be valuable to see how San Jose fine-tunes their approach once they have the EIR completed. That will help inform which direction Mountain View might want to take.

Committee Comments and Questions

Staff answered several questions received from a Committee member prior to the meeting. Regarding a letter the Council received from the American Chemistry Council, the Committee member wondered about the claim that there is a strong market for recycled plastic bags. Staff believes there is a demand for clean, dry, uncontaminated film plastic. However, it is difficult to collect so the return on investment is typically not enough to offset costs. It is estimated that the recycling rate of plastic bags is only 1 percent to 3 percent, so even if the City ramped up collection and required retailers to take bags back, the number of bags recycled may only increase a small amount.

The second question was about the connection between water quality issues and the storm water permit that was recently adopted and the single-use bag issue. Staff noted there is a provision in the new permit requiring short- and long-term litter reduction plans be developed for Mountain View's waterways. There are specific targets, such as 40 percent reduction of trash load in the creeks by 2014. The permit does not specify what measures have to be in the plan but does mention that litter reduction ordinances could be included. Mountain View must develop and submit a plan to the regional board by February 2012. There will be a Council Study Session on the full scope of the new permit soon.

The last question is whether or not the Zero Waste Plan would be an appropriate place for work on the plastic bag issue. Staff replied this Plan will be a high-level document outlining various measures to increase the City's waste diversion. It might suggest options for hard-to-recycle items, such as plastic bags. Preparation of the Plan will not allow the kind of detailed work and public input that would be necessary to implement a bag ban. The current time line for the Plan is to have the City's waste characterization consultant contract in place in December and possibly an RFP ready for the rest of the Plan by February 2010.

Another Committee member asked about the cost of the outreach campaign that Palo Alto did. Staff does not have specific cost information. The

outreach was a joint effort of the solid waste section and the storm water section. A marketing firm created the materials. Staff can inquire about the costs.

A Committee member asked if a County-wide EIR could be done or would the City have to do its own. Staff indicated that the intention of San Jose is that its EIR can be used by the other cities to support an ordinance. The Committee member also asked if a discussion of this item was still scheduled for the upcoming Cities Association meeting. Staff responded that it was their understanding the issue would be discussed by the Cities Association and that San Jose was going to ask the Cities Association to support their position.

A Committee member asked if there is such a thing as a "green" plastic bag. Staff replied that most plastic bags do not have recycled content at this point, partly because the virgin plastic industry and the recycled plastic industry do not work together. Biodegradable bags might be considered a "green" bag, but they only biodegrade in commercial compost settings and are not made from plastic.

A Committee member inquired why nonprofits and restaurants would be exempt and what would happen if some cities adopt an ordinance but others do not. Staff believes the exceptions are intended to allow an incremental approach. Both the RWRC and the City of San Jose share a concern about some cities not participating and urge all to do so.

A Committee member asked about the City doing a campaign similar to Palo Alto's and putting Bring Your Own Bag reminders at retail stores, and wanted to know how quickly Mountain View could start doing other things. Staff indicated that Green Mountain View has approached the City about partnering on such a campaign and that a Bay Area-wide Bring Your Own Bag advertising campaign was just completed. A Santa Clara County advertising campaign will be done in the spring, but no other staff time has been allocated to the bag effort yet.

Public Input

Bruce England indicated that Green Town Los Altos is interested in a community-level bag campaign also and that Green Mountain View feels there is an opportunity to work with Los Altos and Palo Alto on this. He is also concerned about single-use bags at the Farmer's Market and believes someone should apply leverage and get them involved in this effort.

Janis Zinn believes we need to educate the community and the retailers. For example, the checkers should ask if you want a bag instead of doing it automatically.

Julie Lovins commented that the terminology is confusing. Nothing is really single-use. "Carry-out" bags might be more intelligible to the public as a carry-out bag is something that is plastic with handles that you get at the checkout stand, as opposed to bags without handles for produce. She would also like to understand if the Farmer's Market would be covered—are they a retailer. She believes the Farmer's Market is eager to get on board and staff should talk to them.

Dave Paradise commented that cashiers seem to offer bags whether you need one or not. Signs at the register asking if you have your own bag or promoting a rebate would be nice. He felt the San Jose EIR should be leveraged and it is wise to "wait and see" what they do before doing a ban in Mountain View.

Committee Discussion

The Committee discussed the various options outlined in the report. Developing an outreach campaign seems critical to the success of the program because a behavioral change is needed, but more information about the cost is necessary, so budgeting in the next fiscal cycle can be considered.

The Committee also felt that some outreach and discussion with the business community and other stakeholders should start soon, to get moving in the right direction because there is a lot of work to be done with businesses, retailers and the Chamber before an ordinance can be done. The Public Works Director indicated that any outreach around a particular option would need full Council support first. Staff has not developed information about the timing and resources currently available for that.

The Committee would at least like the City to begin moving forward on the needed analysis and outreach; for example, working with the Farmer's Market and talking to businesses. One Committee member believes the ban on plastic bags is coming and that the City should start moving in that direction and that nonprofits should not be exempt. Staff indicated that if the Committee wants to move ahead with a public information campaign and/or stakeholder process, staff time and cost analysis would need to be done before that recommendation could be forwarded to the Council.

The Committee discussed the need for and the process of developing a policy that would prevent single-use bags from being used in City operations. The

Public Works Director commented it would be important to first figure out where, if at all, plastic bags were currently being used, as there may not be other options available. She noted that this is something that would typically be handled through an administrative policy established by the City Manager. Committee member Bryant made a motion to recommend to the Council: (1) that staff develop a public outreach campaign to help remind shoppers to bring their own bag; (2) staff begin a stakeholder process to begin a dialogue about how to limit single-use bags in Mountain View; and (3) direct the City Manager to develop an administrative policy that addresses single-use bags in City operations. The motion was seconded by Committee member Abe-Koga. The motion passed unanimously.

6. COMMITTEE/STAFF COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND REPORTS—
None.

7. SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING—None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

LT/8/PWK
944-11-10-09mn-E^